

Northeast Canyons and Seamounts  
Marine National Monument  
Draft Management Plan and Environmental  
Assessment  
PUBLIC MEETING

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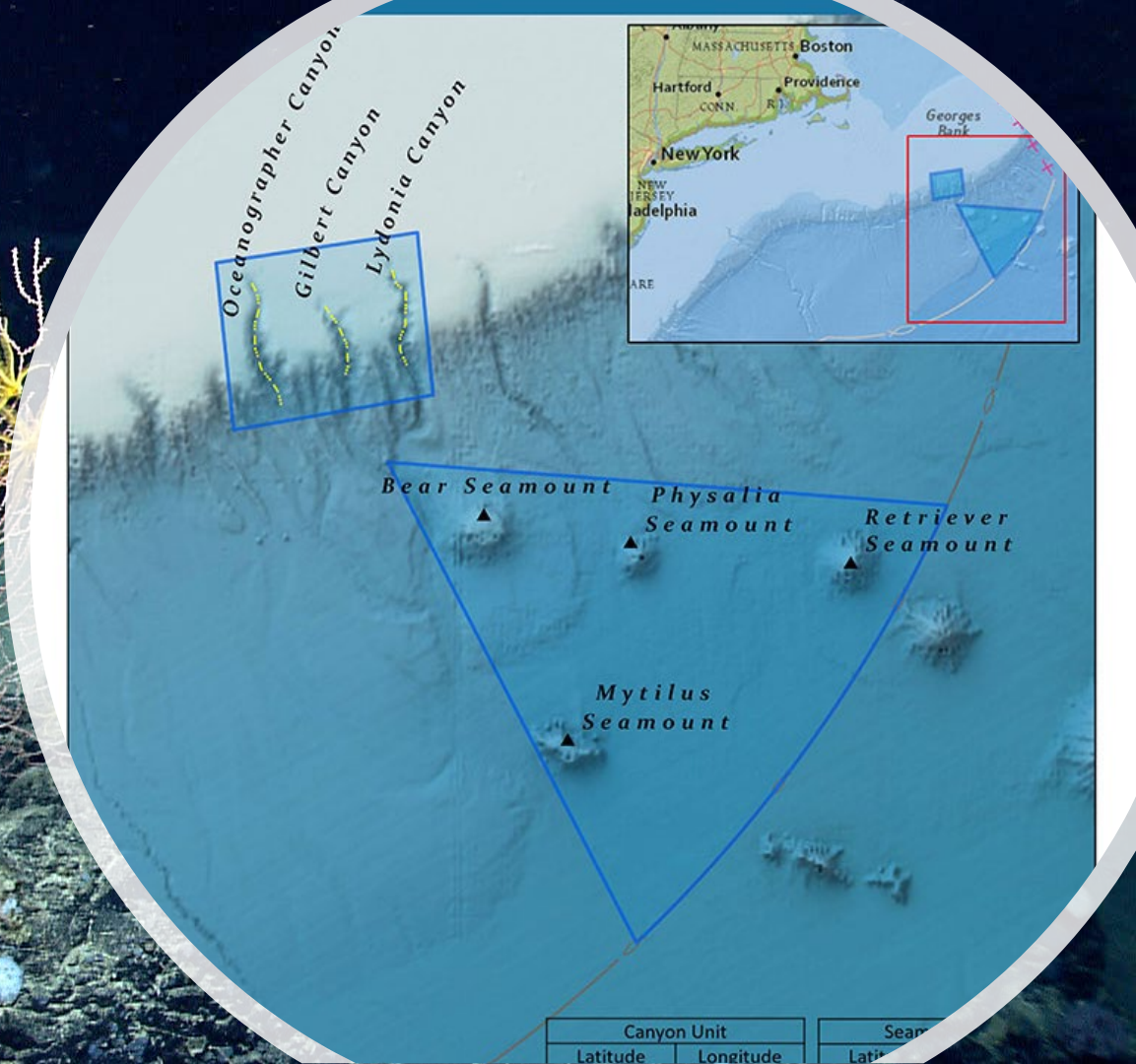


NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM



**NOAA**  
FISHERIES

130 Miles SE of  
Cape Cod,  
Massachusetts



# AGENDA

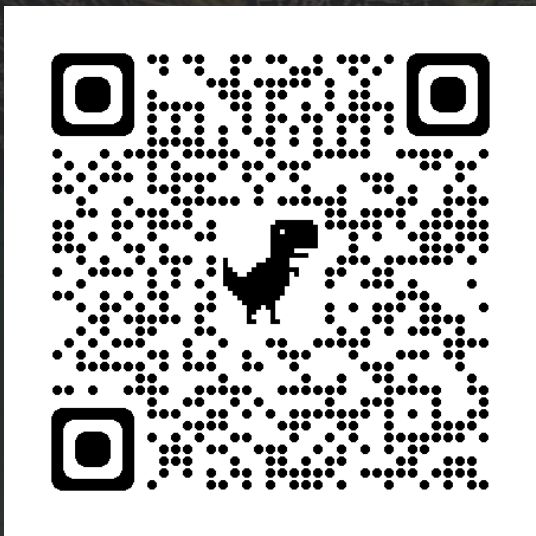
1. **Introductions**
2. **Overview** of the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Assessment
3. **Answer** any questions you may have
4. **Hear** from you!

**Access the Draft Management Plan:**



**WRITTEN COMMENTS ON DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN DUE BY:**  
**Thursday, October 26, 2023**

**Electronically:**



**Mail to:**

Superintendent, Northeast Canyons  
and Seamounts Marine  
National Monument

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
300 Westgate Center Drive,  
Hadley, MA, 01035

## Background on the Monument

- A special place of unique geography, larger than Yellowstone National Park, with incredible biodiversity
- Located in U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (outside state waters)
- Designated in 2016 by Presidential Proclamation (9496)
- Co-managed by two agencies:
  - **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (National Wildlife Refuge System)
  - **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (National Marine Fisheries Service)
- Managed in cooperation with **Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Dept of State**

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is dimly lit, showing various types of coral, including branching and table corals, and several small fish swimming in the water. The background is dark blue, suggesting depth.

# Draft Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

## **Chapter 1: Draft Management Plan and proposed permitting system**

## **Chapter 2: Draft Environmental Assessment**

*Explores 3 alternatives; preferred alternative is Chapter 1 Draft Management Plan*

The image shows an underwater scene with various marine life, including coral and possibly a sea slug. A large, dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay covers the central part of the image, containing white and cyan text. The background is dark blue, typical of deep-sea environments.

## **Draft Management Plan Vision**

*To preserve the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument in perpetuity, and to inspire a sense of awe, wonder and stewardship in current and future generations through discovery and exploration of the sea.*

The background of the slide is an underwater photograph. In the upper left, there are white, branching coral structures. The rest of the image is dominated by a dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay that contains white text. The text is arranged in a hierarchical structure, starting with a main title, followed by a list of three program areas, and then a concluding statement. The overall aesthetic is professional and thematic, related to marine management.

# Draft Management Plan Program Areas

## 3 PROGRAM AREAS:

**MANAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP**  
**RESEARCH & EXPLORATION**  
**ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION**

**EACH PROGRAM AREA HAS GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND  
ACTIVITIES**



# Goals

## PROGRAM: **MANAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP**

**GOAL 1:** CONSERVE AND PROTECT THE MARINE ECOSYSTEM WITHIN THE MONUMENT.

**GOAL 2:** ESTABLISH STAFFING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS; AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE JOINT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP.

## PROGRAM AREA: **RESEARCH & EXPLORATION**

**GOAL 3:** CONDUCT INNOVATIVE, COLLABORATIVE, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF BIOLOGICAL, PHYSICAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES IN THE MONUMENT.

## PROGRAM AREA: **ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION**

**GOAL 4:** INCREASE THE PUBLIC'S AWARENESS OF AND SENSE OF CONNECTION TO THE MONUMENT AND THE DEEP SEA.

# Management & Stewardship Program

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON:

- BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS
- CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
- BUILDING A COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
- IMPROVING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF USES OF THE MONUMENT
- ENSURING THOSE WHO VISIT AND WORK IN THE MONUMENT ARE USING BEST PRACTICES

# Research & Exploration Program

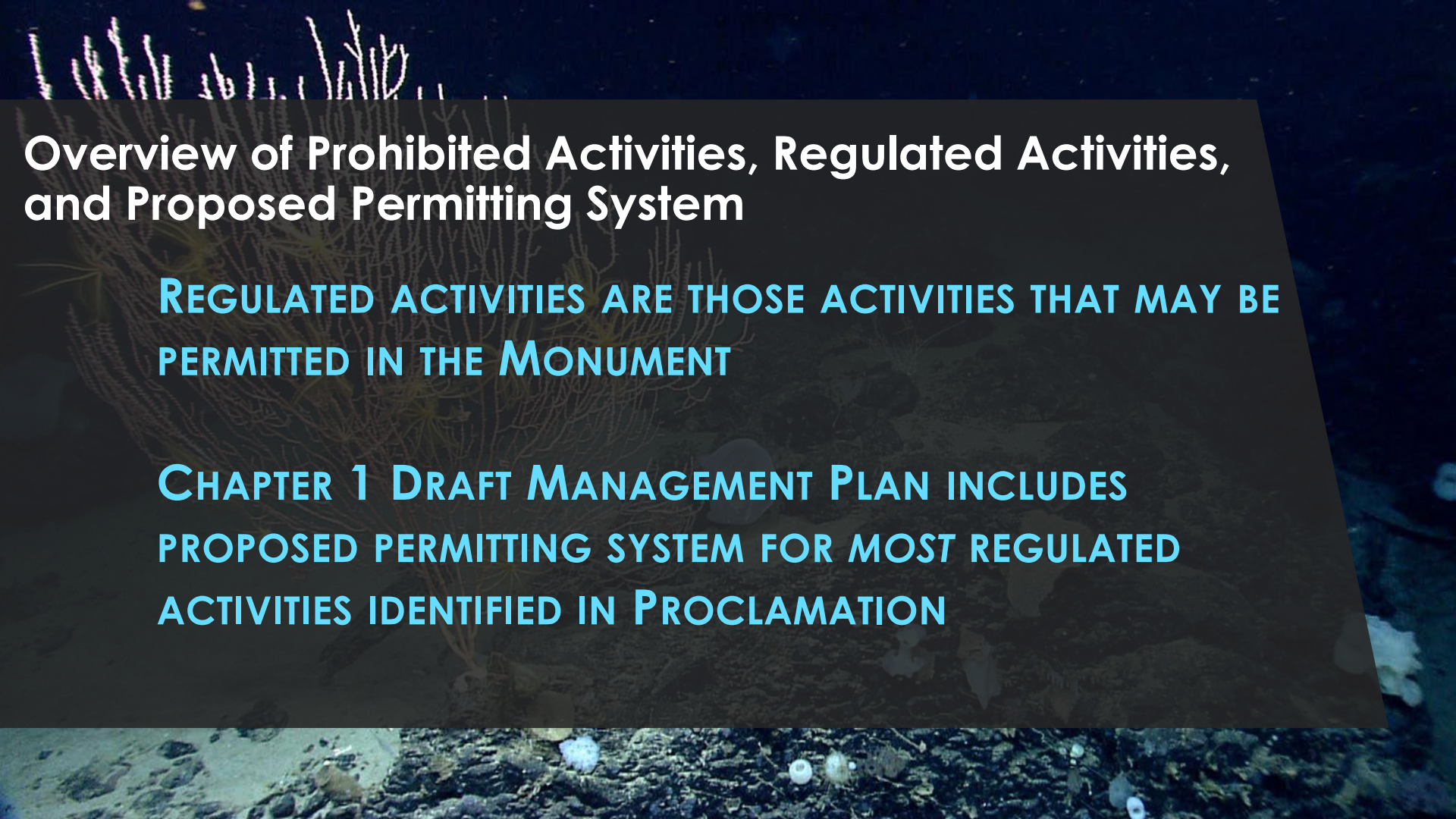
## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON:

- BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS
- CONDUCTING A RESEARCH NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES
- SUPPORTING NOAA'S DEEP SEA CORAL PROGRAM
- PROVIDING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO RESEARCHERS
- ESTABLISHING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO FUND RESEARCH IN THE MONUMENT

# Engagement & Education Program

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON:

- VIRTUAL VISITATION
- ENCOURAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MARINE SCIENTISTS AND MANAGERS
- PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS IN COMMUNITIES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERNS
- ENGAGING IN-PERSON VISITORS TO THE MONUMENT
- ESTABLISHING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO FUND EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The background is dark blue, and the foreground shows various types of coral, including branching and table corals. A large, dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay covers the middle portion of the image, containing white and light blue text. The text is centered and reads: "Overview of Prohibited Activities, Regulated Activities, and Proposed Permitting System", "REGULATED ACTIVITIES ARE THOSE ACTIVITIES THAT MAY BE PERMITTED IN THE MONUMENT", and "CHAPTER 1 DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDES PROPOSED PERMITTING SYSTEM FOR MOST REGULATED ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN PROCLAMATION".

# Overview of Prohibited Activities, Regulated Activities, and Proposed Permitting System

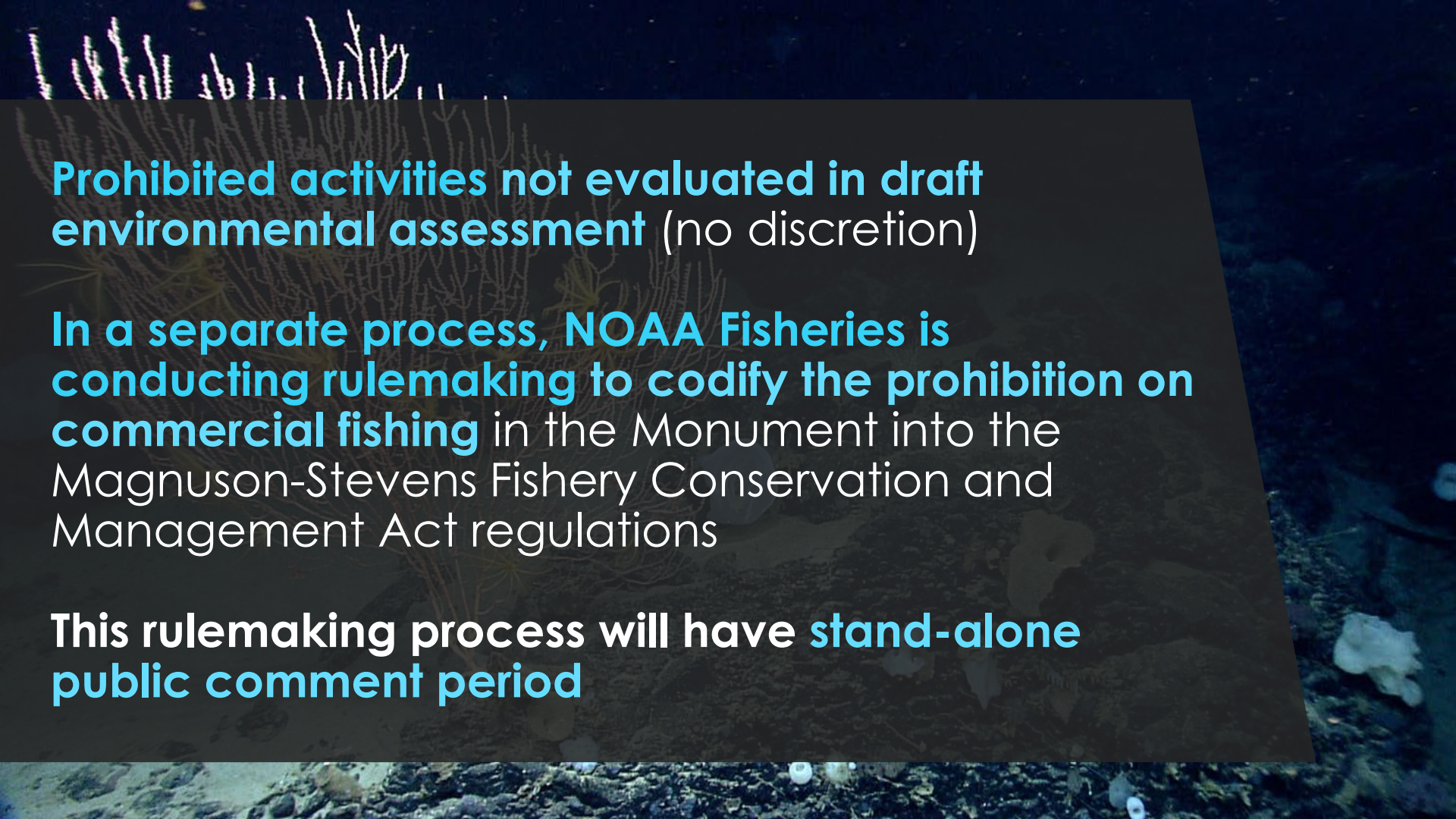
**REGULATED ACTIVITIES ARE THOSE ACTIVITIES THAT MAY BE PERMITTED IN THE MONUMENT**

**CHAPTER 1 DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDES PROPOSED PERMITTING SYSTEM FOR MOST REGULATED ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN PROCLAMATION**

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark blue-green hue. In the foreground, there is a large, branching coral structure. The background shows more coral and some white, possibly bleached or dead coral. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay covers the middle portion of the image, containing white text. The text is arranged in a list format, with a bold title at the top and several bullet points below. The overall composition is vertical, with the text centered horizontally within the dark overlay.

## Prohibited Activities in Presidential Proclamation

- Energy exploration & development
- Using poisons, electrical charges or explosives to collect Monument resources
- Introducing non-native species
- Removing any resources, excepted as allowed under certain regulated activities
- Drilling into, anchoring to, dredging or altering submerged lands (regular anchors are not allowed)
- Commercial fishing

An underwater photograph showing a coral reef. In the foreground, there are large, branching coral structures. In the background, several small fish are visible swimming. The water is clear and blue.

**Prohibited activities not evaluated in draft environmental assessment** (no discretion)

**In a separate process, NOAA Fisheries is conducting rulemaking to codify the prohibition on commercial fishing** in the Monument into the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act regulations

**This rulemaking process will have stand-alone public comment period**

An underwater photograph showing a large, branching coral structure on the left side. A fish is visible in the center, swimming towards the right. The background is dark blue, and the bottom of the frame shows a rocky seabed with some smaller coral and debris.

## Regulated Activities in Presidential Proclamation

- Research and scientific exploration
- Activities that further the educational value of the Monument or will assist in the conservation and management of the Monument
- Anchoring scientific instruments
- Recreational fishing
- Other recreational activities, such as sailing, bird and marine mammal watching
- Construction and maintenance of submarine cables



## Other key elements of Proclamation

- Military and law enforcement activities continue
- Monument will adhere to all international laws (law of the sea)

- **Shipping**

- **Submarine Cables (telecommunications)**

*Management plan activities focus on understanding these two uses, building relationships, and partnering with Coast Guard, Department of State and Navy*

*Future step-down plans are possible*

# Draft Environmental Assessment

Evaluates three alternatives:

- **Alternative 1:** No action
- **Alternative 2 (PREFERRED):** Draft Management Plan (included proposed permitting system)
- **Alternative 3:** Draft Management Plan but with a more extensive permitting approach requiring a **joint-agency Access Permit for entry into the Monument** (in addition to other required permits)

## Proposed Permitting System for Regulated Activities

- NOAA Fisheries **existing permitting system** is foundation
- **New:** USFWS Special Use Permits required for some activities not covered by existing NOAA Fisheries permits
- Applicants **will not be required to get a permit from both agencies** for regulated activities; agencies will coordinate on permits
- **No permits** would be required for **passive recreation** such as sailing, boating, wildlife watching

## NOAA Fisheries existing permits would be required for:

- Charter/headboat recreational fishing
- Private angling for highly migratory species and tilefish
- At-sea educational trips that involve fishing
- Filming (distribution) and some photography of marine mammals
- Research that involves marine mammals

*If projects require these permits, no additional USFWS permit would be required*

## USFWS special use permits would be required for:

- At-sea educational trips that **DO NOT** involve fishing
- Some filming (distribution) that **DOES NOT** require a permit from NOAA Fisheries (case by case basis)
- Research that **DOES NOT** require a permit from NOAA Fisheries

*Submarine cables – regulation of submarine cables is not addressed in management plan*

## Why the preferred alternative is preferred

- Community stewardship is key to conservation
- Connecting people to nature is important
- Logistical challenges to enforcement, compliance, and administration of a system that requires permits for all access

## Timeline

- **November 2022 to January 2023:** Public scoping/comment period
- **September 12, 2023:** **Draft management plan published**
- **September 12 to October 26, 2023:** **Comment period**
- **Winter 2024:** Consider comments, discuss with partner agencies, determine what changes may be made to the plan, write a response to comments
- **Spring 2024:** Publish final management plan (including response to comments)

## Upcoming Meetings:

### Final (of 3) In-Person Meeting

**Portsmouth, NH** - Portsmouth  
Public Library  
Wednesday 10/18 @ 5:30 – 7:30  
PM Eastern

### Final (of 3) Virtual Meeting

Monday 10/23 @ 5:30 – 7:30 PM  
Eastern

## Resources:

### Monument Plan Website

<https://www.fws.gov/project/monument-management-plan>



### Submit comments electronically

(by October 26, 2023)

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/FWS-R5-NWRS-2023-0154-0001>



### Mail comments to:

Superintendent  
Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
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## To Provide Comments Verbally

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- Please use the raise hand function, and we will add you to the queue to provide a verbal comment.
- When we call on you, please unmute yourself.
- Please limit your comments to 3 minutes.

*We are creating a transcript that will be publicly available*



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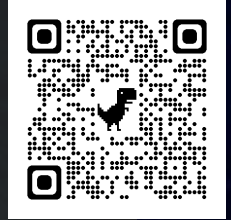
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